form the effective linkages and partnerships necessary for success of the proposed activity.

(3) *Technology and information sources.* The proposal must delineate the sources of information which will be used to create the informational foundation of the resource center. Sources may include those internal to the Center (including staff expertise), but it is expected that many sources will be external. Factors that may be considered include: Strength of core competency in the proposed area of activity; demonstrated access to relevant technical or information sources external to the organization.

(4) *Degree of integration with the manufacturing extension partnership and other technical assistance providers.* The proposal must demonstrate that the source center will be integrated into the system of services provided by the NIST Manufacturing Extension Partnership and other technical assistance providers. Factors that may be considered include: Ability of the target population including MEP Extension Centers to access the resource center; and methodology for disseminating or promoting use of the resource center especially within the MEP system.

(5) *Coordination with other relevant organizations.* Wherever possible the project should be coordinated with and leverage other organizations which are developing or have expertise on similar tools or techniques. If no such organizations exist, the proposal should show that this is the case. Applicants will need to describe how they will coordinate to allow for increased economies of scale and to avoid duplication. Factors that may be considered include: Demonstrated understanding of existing organizations and resources relevant to the proposed project; and adequate linkages and partnerships with existing organizations and clear definition of those organizations' roles in the proposed activities.

(6) *Program evaluation.* The applicant should specify plans for evaluation of the effectiveness of the proposed resource center and for ensuring continuous improvement. Factors that may be considered include: Thoroughness of evaluation plans, including internal evaluation for management control,

external evaluation for assessing outcomes of the activity, and ''customer satisfaction'' measures of performance; and the proposer's plan must include documentation, analysis of the results, and must show how the results can be used in improving the resource center.

(7) *Management experience and Plans.* Applicants should specify Plans for proper organization, staffing, and management of the implementation process. Factors that may be considered include: Appropriateness and authority of the governing or managing organization to conduct the proposed activities; qualifications and experience of the project team and its leadership to conduct the proposed activity; soundness of any staffing plans, including recruitment, selection, training, and continuing professional development; and appropriateness of the organizational approach for carrying out the proposed activity.

(8) *Financial plan.* Applicants should show the relevance and cost effectiveness of the financial plan for meeting the objectives of the project; the firmness and level of the applicant's total financial support for the project; and a plan to maintain the program after the cooperative agreement has expired. Factors that may be considered include: Reasonableness of the budget, both in income and expenses; strength of commitment and amount of the proposer's *cost share;* effectiveness of management plans for control of the budget; and appropriateness of matching contributions.

§ 291.5 Proposal selection process.

The proposal evaluation and selection process will consist of three principal phases: Proposal qualification; proposal review and selection of finalists; and award determination.

(a) *Proposal qualification.* All proposals will be reviewed by NIST to assure compliance with the proposal content and other basic provisions of this notice. Proposals which satisfy these requirements will be designated qualified proposals; all others will be disqualified at this phase of the evaluation and selection process.

(b) *Proposal review and selection of finalists.* NIST will appoint an evaluation panel composed of NIST and in some

cases other federal employees to review and evaluate all qualified proposals in accordance with the evaluation criteria and values set forth in this notice. A site visit may be required to make full evaluation of a proposal. From the qualified proposals, a group of finalists will be numerically ranked and recommended for award based on this review.

(c) *Award determination.* The Director of the NIST, or her/his designee, shall select awardees based on total evaluation scores, geographic distribution, and the availability of funds. All three factors will be considered in making an award. Upon the final award decision, a notification will be made to each of the proposing organizations.

§ 291.6 Additional requirements; Federal policies and procedures.

Recipients and subrecipients are subject to all Federal laws and Federal and Department of Commerce policies, regulations, and procedures applicable to Federal financial assistance awards.

PART 292—MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP; INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

AUTHORITY: 15 U.S.C. 272 (b)(1) and (c)(3) and 278l.

SOURCE: 60 FR 44751, Aug. 29, 1995, unless otherwise noted.

§ 292.1 Program description.

(a) *Purpose.* In accordance with the provisions of the National Institute of Standards and Technology Act (15 U.S.C. 272 (b)(1) and (c)(3) and 278l), as amended, NIST will provide financial assistance to develop the infrastructure of the national manufacturing extension system. Under the NIST Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP), NIST will periodically make merit-based awards to develop and de-

ploy training capability and technical tools, techniques, practices, and analyses. In addition, NIST will develop and implement information infrastructure services and pilots. MEP assumes a broad definition of manufacturing, and recognizes a wide range of technology and concepts, including durable goods production; chemical, biotechnology, and other materials processing; electronic component and system fabrication; and engineering services associated with manufacturing, as lying within the definition of manufacturing.

(b) *Announcements of solicitations.* Announcements of solicitations will be made in the Commerce Business Daily. Specific information on the level of funding available and the deadline for proposals will be contained in that announcement. In addition, any specific industry sectors or types of tools and techniques to be focused on will be specified in the announcement, as well as any further definition of the selection criteria.

(c) *Proposal workshops.* Prior to an announcement of solicitation, NIST may announce opportunities for potential applicants to learn about these projects through workshops. The time and place of the workshop(s) will be contained in a Commerce Business Daily announcement.

(d) *Indirect costs.* The total dollar amount of the indirect costs proposed in an application under this program must not exceed the indirect cost rate negotiated and approved by a cognizant Federal agency prior to the proposed effective date of the award or 100 percent of the total proposed direct costs dollar amount in the application, whichever is less.

(e) *Proposal format.* The proposal must contain both technical and cost information. The proposal page count shall include every page, including pages that contain words, table of contents, executive summary, management information and qualifications, resumes, figures, tables, and pictures. All proposals shall be printed such that pages are single-sided, with no more than fifty-five (55) lines per page. Use 21.6×27.9 cm (8½″×11″) paper or A4 metric paper. Use an easy-to-read font of not more than about 5 characters per